

THE JEWISH GAILY

FORWARD

SHA'AR ZAHAV

שער זהב

MARCH 1980

from a co-leader

As most of you are aware, the position of female co-leader has been vacant for almost a year. This was because of severe differences in many areas between the men and the women who had worked to form Sha'ar Zahav into the feminist (on paper anyway) synagogue that it has been. When the differences in viewpoints became intolerable to the women and a few of the men, various ones of us terminated our relationships with the synagogue. A few of us have returned to Sha'ar Zahav, each for our own reasons. I cannot speak for anyone else, but I came back because I needed a community for the support I could not find anywhere else while I faced a potentially life-threatening illness.

Over the summer I attended Sha'ar Zahav sporadically to see old friends from out of town, to be comforted, whatever. At some point I realized that I was more comfortable at the Synagogue than I had been in a while. The membership had changed; there were some new women

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there who wanted to become actively involved in determining how the synagogue would be shaped further and continued. I held back from any commitments because I still found the place and attitudes extremely sexist, lookish, racist, and ageist, but there were differences in some of the ways in which people were treating each other. Yes, there was still a lot of cruising (where else are you going to find a nice Jewish mate?) but there were also people who were interested in forming chavurot, special interest groups, which would meet outside of regular synagogue commitments. This, I thought, was a good sign, even if I personally could not handle the continual confrontations over the subtle sexist attitudes that still pervaded my dealings with a number of the men.

Last December at a membership meeting, I was struck by the warmth and friendship of the meeting. There were few issues on the agenda to separate us, and what surprised me most: this was the first time in the history of the synagogue that there was more than enough food at a potluck supper. It has always seemed to me, that when people care enough, when people are family, they make sure that everyone is adequately nourished. This time it was with food; maybe next time it would be some other aspect of our life together. I talked to Daniel and said that I would be willing to work with him as co-leader. Since that time I've had to deal with enormous conflicts about going to Va'ad meetings (which are a prime of example of Jewish decision making when 3 Jews have 4 opinions,) about opening old wounds (mine and those of other people.) I realized that there were more women active in the congregation, none of who were ready to take the position of co-leader, and that perhaps I could represent some of their continuing needs better on the board than off it informally.

So here I am giving my state of the congregation message. It's a mixed bag. We survived surgery last spring, but only barely, the wounds are still festering; the scars are not healing nicely. There is a whole new group of people who have given a lot to revitalize what I saw as a dying institution in my life. A good number

of these new members as well as a number of unaffiliated Gay and Lesbian Jews from the Bay Area are working on the Fifth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews which will be held in San Francisco on Labor Day weekend.

There are number of chavurot which have formed or are forming: an East Bay group, a downtown lunch group, a very active women's chavurah which meets monthly for a havdalah service and potluck supper and will be responsible for rosh kodesh services. We have gotten involved in the greater Jewish community through Jewish Social Service and various speaking engagements, we have applied for a major grant for outreach to other gay and lesbian Jews, and are supporting other gays in the continuing fight for our rights (focus to be on Santa Clara County and San Jose where gays are facing a recall of a gay rights ordinance). Things are still not all OK with me. My acceptance of the responsibilities of co-leader do not mean that I like everything I see. I am especially uncomfortable with the lack of knowledge and support for feminist issues and the inability of most of the men with whom I am in contact to understand that when a woman is threatned, gay men are threatned too whether it's civil rights or job discrimination or any of the ills that we face. I am also troubled that only about 40 per cent of the congregation attended the last congregational meeting. I know that this is better than at most traditional synagogues, but it's not enough. We are more diverse in our needs and opinions, and we also grumble more and do less about it than in any place I have ever been. I am tired of hearing criticism and complaining from people who could better spend their energy doing something. For example, if the service does not suit you, work with the ritual committee to write one that does.

I guess I'm mostly hopeful. In this town where it is ususlly easier to be gay than to be Jewish, we have the unique ability to meld the two indnties which for many of us have been separate too long

Penny Dachinger

outreach

Several projects have emerged recently which are of genuine significance to the Congregation's outreach program. The most important of these may well be participation in the campaign against repeal of gay rights ordinances in Santa Clara county. On the June ballot are measures to repeal two recently enacted anti-discrimination laws and we propose to mount a speaking program at synagogues. We want to and encourage our co-religionists, not only to vote against repeal, but as Jews, to condemn the repeal effort publicly.

Other project on the drawing boards include:

1. speaking to other gay organizations about Sha'ar Zahav and its activities. This project will be implemented with the Membership Committee.
2. developing programs to be presented after Friday night services on sex roles in Judaism. This project will be implemented with the Liturgy Committee.

Moreover, we are continuing our holiday visits to the Jewish residents of the Hampshire Convalescence Hospital. To participate in any or all of these worthy endeavors, call Mike Zimmerman at 647-6344.

Mike Zimmerman
Outreach Committee

Congratulations to our co-founder Bernard Pechter on his two recent appointments, to the Alcoholism Board of the City and County of San Francisco and to the Board of the American Jewish Congress. Bernard, may you go from strength to strength.

from where i stand

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We are heading into a season of great joy and hearty simha. As Purim and Pesah draw nearer, we will be making preparations for our individual and community celebrations. Special foods, elaborate meals, special worship services, a spirit of joy and festivity, will begin to bring us out of the doldrums of winter. But I wonder, as this season approaches, if we are ready for it yet.

The rebbe of Tsanz was asked by a Hasid: What does the Rabbi do before praying? I pray, was the reply, that I may be able to pray properly. And so we are faced with the task of preparing ourselves for something religious as well as enjoyable, something we are expected to do as a result of our respect for our tradition, and something we look forward to doing because it is an opportunity to rejoice in our tradition and history.

Seeing Purim in its broadest perspective, we are told that it is a holiday where we celebrate our "rescue" from the evil intentions of Haman the Agagite. By means of the valiant, if reluctant, efforts of the Queen, Esther, the Jews are saved from wholesale slaughter. There are elements of the story which are questionable from a moral standpoint, but the basic idea is sound: we should have the right to exist and be free regardless of what we are.

Pesah, too, is an exciting time with an exciting story. The massive deliverance from slavery, with all the remarkable incidents surrounding the Exodus, are the elements which help make this holiday one of such unbridled festivity.

But underlying both holidays is a theme which has become so axiomatic that it may be slipping out of our consciousness. Both holidays involve the concept of plenty, one with the sending of gifts, and the other involving the opening of one's home to the poor so that none shall go hungry.

As subtle as these concepts are, they are never absent from our teaching and our thinking. What they remind us to do is to remember our obligations to those who have less than we do, for, as we are told, "we were strangers in the land of Egypt."

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And it is not just a matter of charity. The concept goes much farther than that; it is the idea that, as Jews, if we do not fend for ourselves, even in this land of freedom and opportunity, there is likely to be no one else to do it for us. Our history has been replete with examples of this truth, and with precious few exceptions. What this means to us is that, when we come together to form a Jewish institution, such as we have done in creating our synagogue, we take upon ourselves a most solemn obligation, as Jews who are identifying as Jews, to feed the poor, to lift up the fallen, bind up the wounded, and so on. And we are never finished with the task. For were we to bind up and heal and lift up every Jew on the face of the earth, we would still consider it as our responsibility to help others.

In our case, since synagogues of our type are a new phenomenon, our obligations can most profitably take us into the lives of our gay sisters and brothers who, for generations, have not been able or willing to identify Jewishly because of their sexual orientation, or have not been able to be open about their sexuality because of their wish to be acceptable in Jewish circles.

Now that we exist in an atmosphere which encourages the best of both worlds, we need to take even more seriously the task of educating ourselves to be an active and working part of the Jewish community in which we live, helping our lesbian and gay Jewish friends find a true and welcoming home in their rightful community, and helping us learn to help each other. In that way, our outreach is not so much for the sake of the reward or the good name, but for the sake of those whose gain is for the general good. When we open our homes and our hearts, when we understand what our commitment and our obligation really means to ourselves and to the greater community, we can then prepare for the coming festivals with the spirit of Jewish tradition, history, and obligation which make this time of year such a joy. Our burden will be less because we share it together.

Allen

seder

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On Tuesday April 1, at 6 p.m., Congregation Sha'ar Zahav will hold its third annual Passover seder. As before, the seder will be held on the second night of Passover.

This year the seder will be held at the Jewish Community Center, 655 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco (not the JCC on California and Presidio where we hold Friday night services). The Center on Brotherhood Way is near the M trolley car line and on the #70 bus line. A ticket reservation form is included in this newsletter. Please mail it back as soon as possible as space is limited. If you would like to help with the seder, please give Mike a call at 928-1255. It will be much appreciated.

rap

On Tuesday, March 25, at 8 p.m., a discussion group is scheduled at Gay Rap for Jewish gay people. "Jewish, Gay...and Proud" will be a wide-ranging discussion about aspects of gay community and culture toward which we as Jewish gay people feel an affinity and from which we feel alienated. Jewish and gay self-identity, anti-semitism and homophobia are other issues we will touch upon. The discussion will be facilitated by Jerry Harris, PhD, Sociology. Jerry has been active in the Lost Tribe, a Jewish gay political and educational group which worked against the Briggs Initiative and coordinated its efforts with Sha'ar Zahav. Gay Rap meets Tuesdays at 8 p.m. at 150 Eureka, between 18th and 19th Streets, in the Metropolitan Community Church building. \$2 donation is requested. For further information, call Jerry at 552-1960 or 626-3131.

the family circle

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Membership continues to grow, 103 as of this writing. We must not get too proud. . . we must work all the harder. We are in need of more ideas to get and keep new members on a continuing basis. Can you help us?

I have had no response to last months notice regarding changes and or additions to your personal membership information. I'm certain this must be an oversight on the part of some of you. Please help us keep records current.

Unless we are directed otherwise we will print birthday, anniversary, and Yahrzeit information in the monthly FORWARD. If, for any reason you do not wish your name printed please let us know.

DON'T FORGET the special membership sponsored Oneg after services on March 14th. The theme is:

BE A FRIEND
BRING A FRIEND
MAKE A FRIEND

Make sure you are there that night with at least one person who is new to Sha'ar Zahav. And for any or you who havn't joined us in a while, make that the night you return.

Our next monthly membership committee meeting is March 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the home of David Gass. Call me for details and address.
Shalom
Leila Raim
co-chair, Membership Committee

oneg

The Oneg Committee will meet on March 19, at 7:30 p.m. at David Ben-Jacob's home, 1330 Bush#7D, San Francisco. If you have any interest in this committee, you are welcome to attend.

The next Potluck Oneg will be held on March 21, after services. Potluck Onegs will be on the third friday of every month. Please attend services that night and don't forget to bring something for the Oneg.

passover

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The following paragraphs are excerpted and paraphrased from the Jewish Catalog chapter on the festivals.

As with the other major festivals (Shavous and Succoth), Passover has both agricultural and historical origins. Agriculturally there are two distinct roots. Early spring was the time when cows began to calve, and a "Paschal sacrifice" was offered by cowherders at this time. There was a parallel offering of first fruits by farmers, whose wheat crop was also ready at this time of year. Historically, Passover commemorates the exodus from Egypt and our release from slavery. The Paschal sacrifice thus refers also to the meal which G-d commanded the Israelites to eat the evening before they left Egypt, while the grain offering in the form of matzah refers to the bread baked by the Israelites before their hasty departure from Egypt.

Although redemption is the primary theme of the holiday, a secondary theme, paradoxically, is creation. Passover is a new year festival--the new year that is signified by spring, by rebirth and revival. According to the traditional counting of months, Nissan is the first month of the Jewish calendar. (Rosh Hashana, although the birthday of the world, is celebrated on the "first day of the seventh month.")

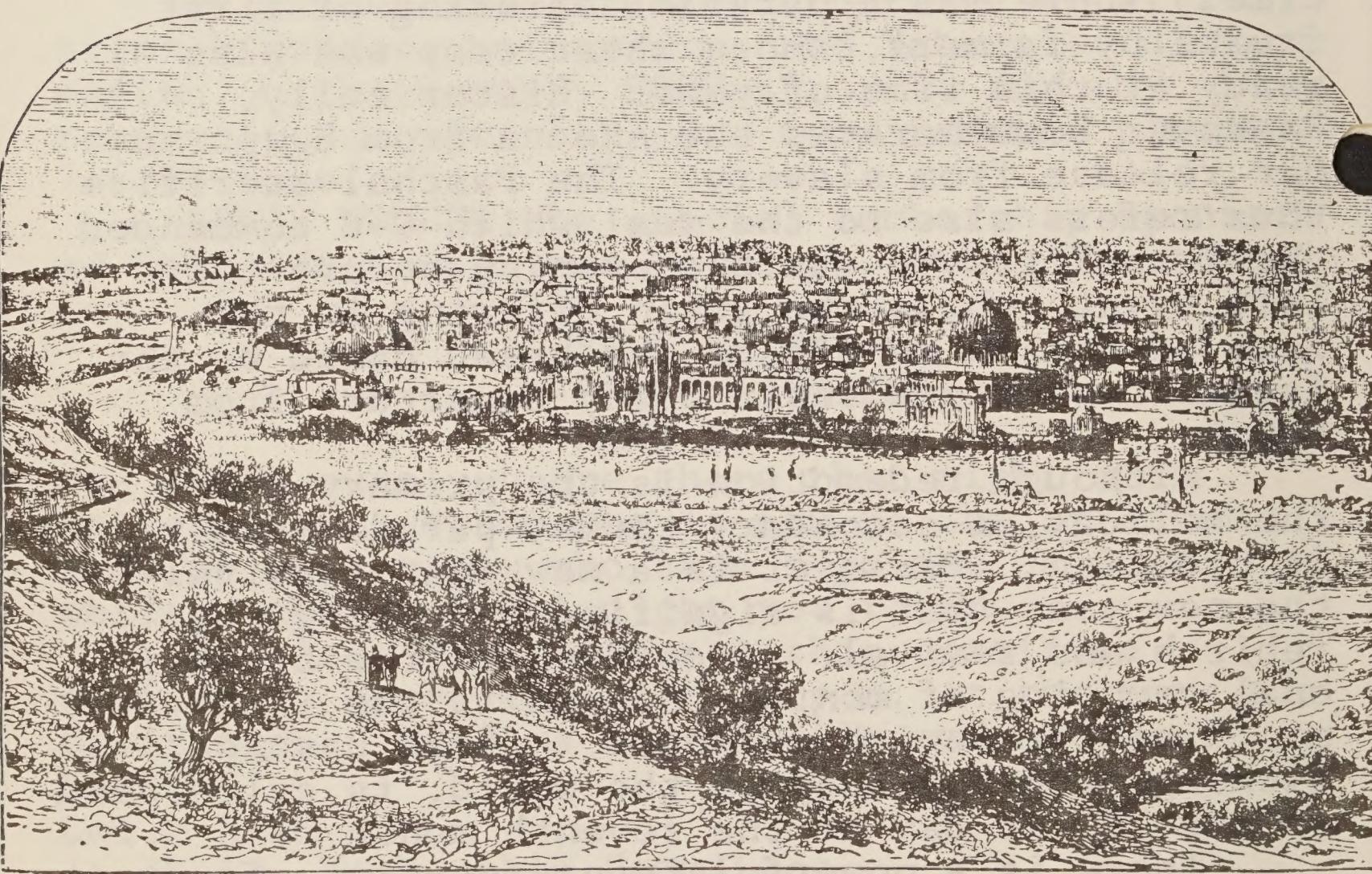
There is a powerful interpretation of Passover which is pointed out in the Passover Seder: we are commanded to regard ourselves as though we personally had gone out of Egypt. Through this, we become directly beholded to G-d for our freedom; also, since we have been "slaves in the land of Egypt," we must be sensitive to the oppression of others.

The Chassidic movement interprets this further: The word for Egypt **מצרים** stems from the root word **מצרים**, which means narrow, constrained, inhibited. Thus to say that each of us must leave Egypt is to say that each of us must struggle to break out of the narrowness that confines

us, and free ourselves to attain our full potential--spiritual, emotional, and psychological. (It is perhaps instructive that even after leaving Egypt, the Jews wandered in the desert for forty years before reaching the Promised Land.)

The next in our series of Last Saturday Workshops will focus on Passover. Join us on Saturday, March 29 at 3:00 p.m. for a potluck dinner and teach-in on Passover

Laurie Radovsky



letters to the editor

Recently in one of the mailings from Sha'ar Zahav there was a request for available rental units.

I do have 2 flats available at this time on Octavia St in the Hays Valley area of the City

The lower flat will rent for \$325 and the upper for \$375, Both are in the process of being spruced up and both are 2 bedroom flats.

If you are aware of anyone interested, I can be reached at the following:
 Allan Blumenfeld
 661-6751 eves and weekends

education

The Hillel chapter at San Francisco State University offers this spring semester, through the educational series of LEHRHAUS JUDAICA, two classes of great interest to us:

1. "Women in Judaism Guest Panel: Rita Semel, Associate Director, S.F. Jewish Community Relations; Dina Levine, Educator, Brandeis-Hillel Day School, S.F.; Rabbi Michal Bourne, Temple Emanu-El (March 5, 7:00-9:00p.m.)
2. "Judaism and Homosexuality" This seminar will be conducted by Rabbi Allen Bennett and Penny Dachinger (March 12, 7:00-9:00 p.m.).

For more information, call the Hillel office 333-4922 or contact directly the instructors of the seminar.

The two Biblical Hebrew classes, free for members of Sha'ar Zahav, are in progress: however it is not too late to join us (Beginning Biblical Hebrew, Tuesday 7:30-8:30; Intermediate Biblical Hebrew, Tuesday 8:30-9:30). The classes meet at the Jewish Community Center at California and Presidio in room 101.

Haim Gamburg
Chair, Education Committee

EUROPE YOUR DREAM VACATION?

Seeking matured male any age willing to share expenses. Prefer quiet, non-rowdy type. Via Eurailpass, mid-May 3½ weeks. Call Don Goldstein (213) 283-2664.

program

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The Program Committee is pleased to announce the following programs. All programs will commence following the conclusion on services on the night shown.

February 22 Rev. Brita Gill of the First Congregational Church will talk about her role as a member of the Clergy, as a woman and as a career person.

February 29 Jewish Welfare Federation Evening. Program and film entitled "Melody of Hope"

March 14 Membership Committee program

March 21 Rosh Chodesh Program. Guest speaker Rev. Ellen Barrett on her role as clergy person and as a woman

April 4 The Bay Area Council on Soviet Jewry will present a 10 minute film on Refusenik, a short talk about involvement, background, correspondences, and morale. People in Need.

Other programs for April will be announced shortly. Programs are subject to change.

women's chavara

A group of women has been meeting each month at each other's homes for a havdalah service and pot luck supper. We would like to invite any woman who might be interested to join us in this simple and beautiful way to end the sabbath and start the week. If you need any additional information, please call Penny (668-6902) or Leila (751-1576). If you need transportation, we can arrange it. The next havdalah and pot luck will be at Leila's home on March 15. Please call for the address and menu planning

"CONTROVERSY, CULTURE and COFFEE"

Presented by:

The BUREAU of JEWISH EDUCATION & The JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

Mar 9: ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAL RIGHTS
Prof William Brinner

Mar 16: THREE WOMEN POETS-ORIGINAL WORKS
Elaine Starkman, Gail Newman, Florence Miller

Mar 23: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION-REVERSE DISCRIMINATION
Mark Schickman

Apr 13: THE GLORIOUS PRESENCE-BAAL SHEM TOV
Rabbi Burt Jacobson

Apr 20: INTER-ETHNIC TENSION IN SAN FRANCISCO
Earl Raab

May 4: A PHILOSOPHY OF JEWISH EDUCATION FOR THE 80's
Dr. David Polish

May 18: FLYING HEBREW LETTERS
Peretz Prusan, DEMONSTRATION AND GROUP PARTICIPATION

June 1: JEWISH NIGUN AND SPONTANEOUS DANCE
Jacob Picheny

SUNDAYS, 10 A.M.-- Jewish Community Library
601 14th Ave
San Francisco

With the Participation of the Jewish Arts Community Of the Bay (JACOB)

LAST SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

The Liturgy Committee of Sha'ar Zahav

Presents

SABBATH WORKSHOPS

on the

LAST SATURDAY

of

MARCH, APRIL AND MAY

March 29 Understanding Passover

April 26 Ritual Objects

May 31 Sabbath--The Friday Night Liturgy

Each workshop will include a potluck lunch or dinner, and, where possible, a havdallah service. Individuals are invited to participate in all or part of a workshop.

Times and locations to be announced.
Call 861-4142 or 861-4776 for information

Mike Zimmerman

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you're moving,
please allow six
weeks for
processing time.

Attach current address label here.

NEW ADDRESS:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Mail to:
Sha'ar Zahav
P.O. Box 5640
S.F. CA 94101

donations

Thanks to the following for their donations to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav last month:

Shelly Brauer
Daniel Hansman
Walt Leiss
Beauregard Lowell
George Lucas and Tom Rothgiesser
Steve Rosenberg
Gerry Rosenstein
Nancy Rubin

yahrzeits

March 17 Nathaniel Tannen, father of
Peter Tannen

March 28 Samuel J. Phillips, father of
Victoria Phillips

birthdays

March 10, Aryae Levy
March 24, Daniel Ashkenazi
March 25, Jordan Lee
March 26, Melvin Cordoba

Mazel Tov to Bet Mishpachah (Washington D.C.)
on the arrival of their new Torah!

ritual calendar

March 7, Services: Daniel Chesir

March 13, Beginning of Jewish Music Month:
Make some!

March 14, Services: Allen Bennett

March 15, Liturgy Workshop, Allen Bennett's
house, 1650 Page St. 10-3 p.m. Bring
a Bag lunch. Call Allen 861-4776 or
Laurie 621-0893.

Women's havdallah and pot luck.
Leila Raim's house, 197 Beaumont,
5 p.m., Call Leila at 751-1576 or
Laurie 621-0983.

March 21, Services: Rosh Chodesh; Penny Dach-
inger and women's chaverah.

March 28, Services: Paul Cohen

March 29, Last Saturday Study Group: Pesach
Laurie Radovsky's house, 3 p.m.,
38A Pearl, San Francisco. Call
Laurie 621-0893 or Mike Zimmerman
647-6344.

congregation sha'ar zahav

Box 5640
San Francisco, CA 94101
(415) 626-3131

PASSOVER SEDER RESERVATION FORM

Please mail this form to:

CONGREGATION SHA'AR ZAHAV (Attn: Michael Kretman)
P. O. Box 5640
San Francisco, CA 94101

Be sure to enclose your check or money order payable to SHA'AR ZAHAV
ONEG ACCOUNT.

All reservations and payment must be received by Friday, March 21, 1980

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Number of Member Tickets @ \$15 ea. _____

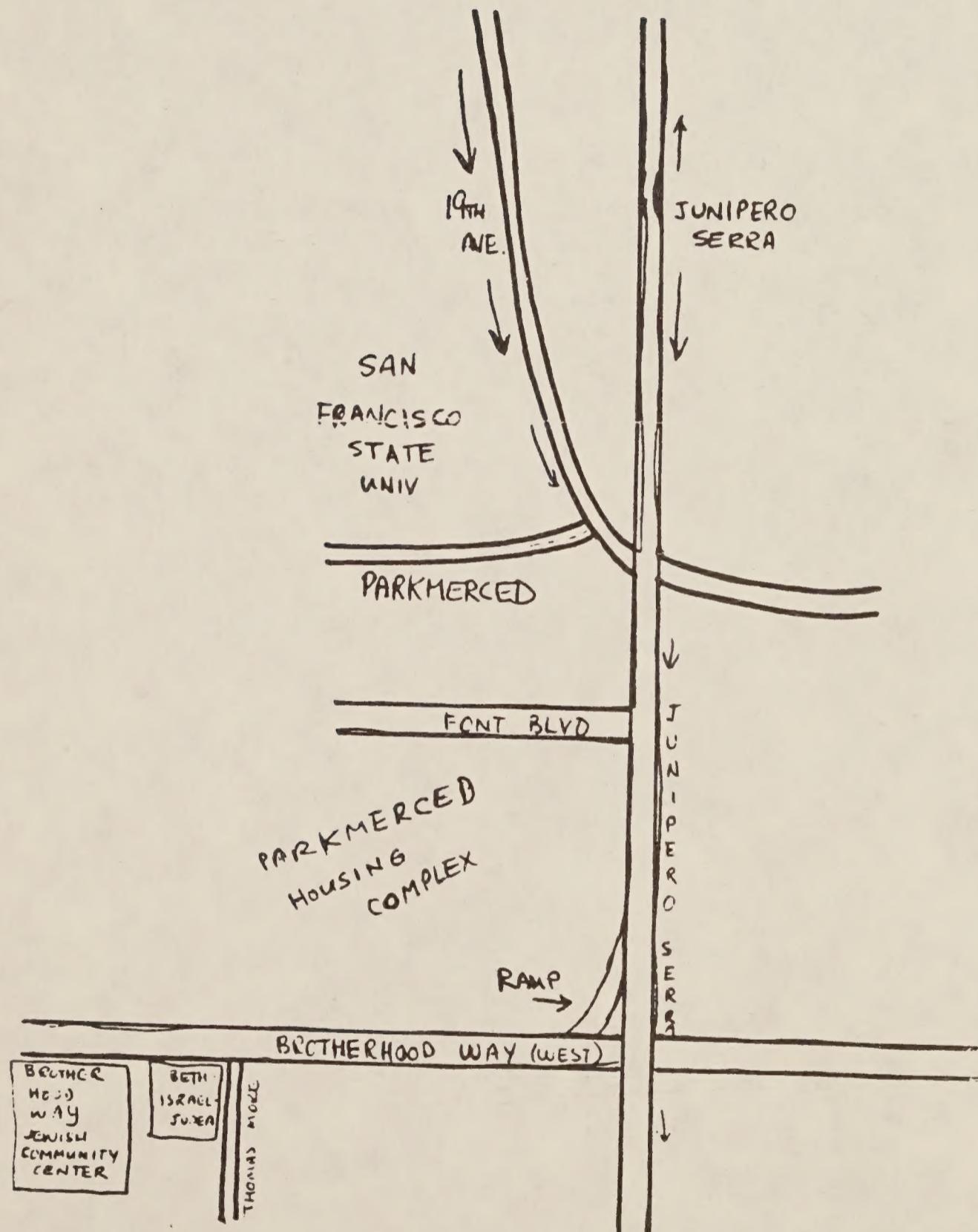
Number of Guest Tickets @ \$17 ea. _____

Number of Sponsor Tickets @ \$20 ea. _____

Number of Children's Tickets @ 7 ea. _____

Please specify the names of those requiring the vegetarian menu.

Total Payment enclosed:



CALL FOR PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS & PROPOSALS

**The Fifth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews
will be held in San Francisco
August 29 - September 1, 1980**

The Conference will include a variety of workshops. Formats to be included are organized symposia, facilitated discussions, and open discussion hours. We welcome your proposals for these and other innovative formats.

The categories for the workshops are: Jewish issues, synagogue issues, and personal/political issues.

If there are particular workshops you would like to see in the program please submit a title, preferably with a description of content.

II where are works you would like to illustrate, papers you would like to present, or panel discussions you would like to be a part of please submit program titles, description, and information about yourself.

Conference planners will select from the material submitted.

Suggestions and Proposals must be submitted by

15 April 1980

to: WORKSHOP COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 5640
San Francisco, California 94101

For registration forms and all other matters concerning the conference, write to
Conference Coordinator at the above address.

The Fifth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews
is being hosted by Congregation Sha'ar Zahav and
gay and lesbian Jews of the Bay Area.

